

■ PRESIDENT'S "E" AWARDS RECOGNIZE EXPORTING EXCELLENCE

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When Kyongwon "William" Kim, president of EP International in Irvine, California decided to build his business around mustard he knew the formula for success: Change the taste preferences of Korean consumers who were not accustomed to eating the spicy yellow condiment.

It wasn't easy. Kim hired women in cowboy hats to hand out free samples in downtown Seoul. But slowly, his efforts began to reap rewards; Korea now

The Award, created by President Kennedy in 1961, recognizes U.S. businesses and organizations that have attained four years of consecutive outstanding export growth. As clients of the Commerce Department's Commercial Service, these award-winners represent a cross-section of America — everything from educational services and family-owned manufacturing to agricultural products and transportation.

"These awards demonstrate what can be accomplished through public-private sector cooperation," Evans said. "When we help these businesses grow by guiding them through the export process, they in turn help the economy

ny is a world-class designer and manufacturer of bearings elements used in turbines and other power generation equipment. Kingsbury bearings were used extensively in U.S. warships during World War II and also during the subsequent reconstruction of Europe. Kingsbury originally won the Department of Defense "E" Award during WW II for creating parts for naval vessels.

In the 1980s, Kingsbury began to tap European markets, slowly spreading their markets to Australia, China, and India. Between 1998 and 2001, export sales for Kingsbury rose more than 55 percent, comprising 38.5 percent of total sales in 2001. Now, the firm has

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imports nearly 10 shipping containers a month of American-grown mustard seeds, mustard powder and yellow Morehouse Mustard in barrels, buckets and plastic squeeze bottles. EP International also sells millet to Indonesia and peas to Japan — foods not generally common to the Asian palate.

For their endeavors in the global arena, Kim and sixteen other U.S. firms received the Presidential "E" Award for excellence in exporting last month from Commerce Secretary Don Evans.

and create high-paying jobs for the working people of America."

Service providers also play an important role in the success of exporters and therefore are recognized with the "E" Award for Excellence in Export Service. Awardees provide financing, consultation services, and market promotion to exporting firms.

Kingsbury, Inc., of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, is another "E" Award winner. Founded in 1912, the compa-

ny come full circle, winning the "E" Award purely on commercial merit. Kingsbury's President, Mr. Woods R. Brown, says the firm has achieved this success "through responsive customer service, constant product innovation, and beneficial partnerships with foreign sales representatives Italy, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom."

Taylor Lumber of McDermott, Ohio, a leader and trendsetter in the flooring and hardwood industry, is a family-owned, rurally based company that has



Secretary Evans recognizes “E” Award winners during a ceremony held in Washington, DC on June 6. More than 2,700 firms have received recognition for their achievements in exporting since the award was created in 1961.

been in operation since 1881. An “E” Award winner, Taylor began to pursue international markets for its goods in 1975. The high-quality lumber sold by Taylor is used in many different areas, from traditional home construction and furnishings, to paper products, filters, and fragrances. Over the last five years, Taylor Lumber exports have grown by 236 percent, from \$6.4 million in 1997, to \$15.1 million in 2001. Export sales revenue now constitute more than half of total sales revenue. Employment at Taylor Lumber has gone from 56 workers in 1986 to 182 workers in 2001, providing a substantial job base in Scioto County. Taylor lumber has worked closely with the U.S. Department of Commerce to participate in trade missions, gather market research and make international business contacts. Taylor’s President, David R. Graf, says that “as a rural company, we’re proud to continue growing through export sales, as this means we can offer more jobs to the local community.”

Another “E” Award success is Melton Truck Lines, Inc., of Tulsa, Oklahoma. Melton Truck Lines had been in the trucking business since 1954 when,

more than 20 years ago, they began shipping internationally to Canada and Mexico. More recently, Melton has benefited from increased cooperation and coordination between these countries as a result of NAFTA. “Since 1996, Melton Truck Lines has seen its international business nearly double,” says Robert A. Peterson, the firm’s president. “Export sales now make up 22 percent of our company’s business.”

For firms like EP International, Kingsbury, Taylor, and Melton, the Presidential “E” Award is recognition by the U.S. government of what the private sector can achieve.

2,700 companies have won the “E” Award since its inception 40 years ago. This year’s award-winners are following in the foot steps of the original winners, which included IBM, Ford and Boeing. Although times have changed, the importance of exports to our nation’s economic growth and security are more important than ever. ■

“E” AWARDS CRITERIA

The criteria for receiving the “E” Award include:

- Demonstrated excellence in exporting by showing evidence of a substantial increase in volume of exports over four consecutive years,
- Having broken into highly competitive markets,
- Introducing new products into U.S. export trade,
- Shown evidence of overcoming exporting problems
- Have a detailed and effective international marketing program, and
- Shown that exports constitute a significant portion of total product sales and/or are materially in excess of the industry average.

Businesses can submit an application, which is available online at www.usatrade.gov under “Special Initiatives,” or can visit their local export assistance center for guidance in filing the application.

Each applicant is considered by the President’s “E” Award committee, a group representing the U.S. government’s various international trade interests. The Secretary of Commerce makes final selection. If applicants are not successful with their first submission, feedback is provided so that subsequent applications may result in receipt of the reward.